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readers, should not be neglected. As to the manner in which we shall discharge this duty, we have only this to say: To be a perfect critic, a writer must possess a judgment informed by the closest study and the widest observation, and unclouded by a single prejudice. We do not claim for ourselves this high position. It would be difficult to find any to whom it might be awarded. If there be such a master amongst us, let him come forward; our columns are freely at his service. We should esteem it the greatest of privileges to sit among his pupils, and to be instrumental in bringing his thoughts before the people. But we assume no such pedagogical rank—no such magisterial prerogative. We would have the critical opinions which we, and those associated with us, may offer in this journal, received as the observations of fellow-learners and seekers after truth, uttered not because they are thought to be infallible, but because they have been well examined and are fully believed. If they are wrong, prove them to be so, and they shall be corrected as publicly as they may have been expressed.

But while we shall avoid that dogmatic style which some journals adopt, as well as that caustic severity which is used rather to spice the article than to benefit the reader, we shall equally shun that tone of indiscriminate praise which is even more common than the other fault. We shall endeavor to form our opinions with care, and then express them plainly and honestly—keeping in view both the interests of Art and the sensitiveness of artists. In a word, we shall strive to have our criticism just and pointed, and at the same time controlled—as SCHADOW says all Art-criticism ought to be—by “benevolent feelings, the love of truth, and the desire of conducting to perfection the talents upon which it is exercised.”

AFFAIRS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE YEAR 1850.

It is known to most of our readers that at the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Art-Union, on the evening of Friday, the 21st of December last, the seven gentlemen forming the class whose term of office expired at that time were re-elected. The Committee, therefore, remained as it was constituted at the close of the last year.

At a regular meeting of the Committee, holden on the 24th day of December last, Mr. PHILIP HONE was called to the Chair, and Mr. BENJAMIN H. JARVIS appointed Secretary. Balloting then took place, agreeably to the Constitution, for Officers of the Association; whereupon the following gentlemen were unanimously re-elected, viz.:—Mr. PROSPER M. WETMORE, President, Mr. GEORGE W. AUSTEN, Treasurer, Mr. ANDREW WARNER, Corresponding Secretary, and Mr. NATHANIEL JARVIS, Jr., Recording Secretary.

At a subsequent meeting, holden on the 21st day of February last, Mr. WETMORE tendered his resignation as President and Member of the Committee, and Mr. A. M. COZZENS was unanimously elected President. Mr. JAMES W. BEEKMAN also resigned his seat at the Board on the 7th day of February. Messrs. W. H. APPLETON and GEORGE CURTIS have been elected to fill the vacancies in the Committee occasioned by the above-mentioned resignations.

THE PROGRAMME FOR THE YEAR 1850.

It is impossible at this early period to announce a full plan of operations for the present year. It has been determined to extend the patronage of the Institution as far as practicable to every department of the Fine Arts, and to spare no efforts to develop talent among artists, and taste among the people.

The Engraving for the members of 1850 will be upon steel, in the highest style of the art, and executed by Mr. Charles Burt, whose productions have already gained for him much distinction. The subject is “*Anne Page, Slender, and Shallow*,” after Mr. Charles R. Leslie’s celebrated painting in the possession of Philip Hone, Esq. This picture has long been known to amateurs as one of the best works in the country, as well as one of the choicest specimens of its celebrated author’s pencil. It is full of that power in the delineation of character—that keen appreciation of the humorous, and successful translation of it into the language of Art, which, united with great technical skill, have elevated Mr. Leslie to the chair of the Professorship of Painting in the Royal Academy. This gentleman was born in London, but of American parents, during a short visit they made to England. He was brought home while a child, and may properly be enumerated among American artists.

An etching of this work, which is to be distributed with the “*Transactions*,” will give to the members some idea of its composition. The subject is taken from Shakspeare’s *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Scene IV, Act III, where Justice Shallow is aiding his nephew Slender in his awkward attempt to woo Mistress Anne Page. The etching will show but little of the picture beyond its general arrangement. The original abounds in exquisite details and subtle graces, which can only be seized and reproduced in a large engraving, such as Mr. Burt is now executing. Upon this the constant labor of fourteen months has already been bestowed, and the whole of the remainder of the present year will be required to render it a faithful representation of the work from which it is taken.

It has also been determined to present to each member for 1850, a set of FIVE PRINTS FROM LINE ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL, of the average size of seven and a half inches by ten inches, after the following paintings, viz.:—COLE’S *Dream of Arcadia*, LEUTZE’S *Image Breaker*, EDMONDS’S *New Scholar*, DURAND’S *Dover Plains*, and WOODVILLE’S *Card Players*. These will be executed by the most distinguished engravers in the country. STATUETTES in bronze, MEDALS and SCULPTURE in MARBLE, will probably be also included in the distribution.

THE BULLETIN has been considerably enlarged. It includes a greater amount of reading matter than it has ever given before, and future numbers will probably be more interesting than the present, as measures have been taken to promote this end which have not yet had time to mature. Every effort will be made to add to the value of this department consistently with a proper regard to the cardinal features of the Institution.

Among the paintings to be distributed the present year are the following:—*The Dream of Arcadia*, by COLE, which is considered by many to be his finest landscape; a spirited illustration of a popular German Ballad, by

LEUTZE; several works, by GLASS, two of which, *The Standard in Danger* and *The Standard Bearer*, (to be distributed as one prize,) furnish the subjects of the etching for the present number. *The Marriage of Washington*, by STEARNS; *Boone’s Discovery of Kentucky*, by RANNEY; *First Love*, by PEELE; *The Mischievous Boys*, by FISCHER; *Peasants of Cevarro*, by HICKS; and several pleasing Landscapes, by DOUGHTY, WEIR, CROPSEY, CHURCH, KENSETT, GIGNOUX, GIFFORD, and others. The collection will be constantly increased by the purchase of new pictures, as well as the addition of works deposited in the Gallery for exhibition.

TO THE FRIENDS OF THE ART-UNION.

WE ask the attention of our readers to the plan of operations proposed to be followed by the Art-Union during the present year. The Society again offers its claims to the consideration of the people. It depends entirely upon their support now as it did the first year of its existence. Its constitution forbids the accumulation of a fund, and, therefore, it begins in 1850 as it did in 1839, with an empty treasury. It is rich, however, in that which is better than money. It has gradually acquired and laid up the good will of the public. This is its most valuable—almost its only possession. It has always relied upon this for the means to carry on its operations, and has rarely been disappointed. The present year must not prove an interruption to this prosperity. The position of the Society has become so prominent, and its sphere of usefulness so enlarged, that any check now would prove disastrous to the general interests of American Art.

More strongly than ever, in our opinion, may the Art-Union appeal to the public in this season of political agitation. It presents a field of work in which all may unite like brethren. It belongs to the *whole* people. It disregards all sectional differences. It is attached to no party. It addresses the South as well as the North—the poor as well as the rich—the followers of every occupation and the believers in every creed. It was established to promote the rational enjoyment—to contribute to the refinement—to elevate the taste of all. It may have no affinities with the mere *diletante* who values a Work of Art for its rarity only, and not its intrinsic merit—and to whom Painting and Sculpture are worth nothing, except as they minister to his luxury and personal ambition. But all those who believe that the Beautiful should be cultivated as well as the True and Good—who acknowledge the refining influences of Art upon public and private life, and its worth as a means of quickening love of country and teaching important truths, must take an interest in the operations of this Society. Those who regard the subject in this broader and more patriotic view, must look with eager curiosity upon the annual productions of the Art-Union. Its motley exhibitions, in which the infant Art of the nation speaks forth pure and bold thoughts in strong, although it may be, in artificial language—the multitudes of working men and their wives and children, who crowd its galleries, uttering their criticisms in uncourtly phrases—ignorant of technical mysteries, but now and then feeling as deeply as a Schlegel or a Hazlitt some touch of nature in the

works before them; all these are significant and gratifying sights to the enlightened lovers of Progress amongst us. It was upon these persons that the Managers relied during the past year to support them in their efforts. The event has shown that this confidence was not misplaced. Notwithstanding several unpropitious influences, these true friends came forward in larger numbers than ever before, to add the weight of their names and means to the cause, and the result was that the Institution, at the close of the books, exhibited a larger roll of members than any similar society in the world had ever before presented.

It was supposed that the prevalence of an epidemic, the activity of rivals, and the want of a glittering capital prize, like that which was offered in 1848, would seriously diminish the subscription list. It is undoubtedly true that these causes were not without unfavorable effects; but the Art-Union is evidently too well established in the regard of the community to be materially affected, except by a combination of adverse circumstances still more formidable than these.

The Committee of Management feel grateful to the public for the confidence in their fidelity, which is manifested by this large increase of subscriptions. It is a more convincing defence of their proceedings than the most ingenious piece of logic, or the most consummate display of eloquence. They have never answered specifically the calumnies which have been directed against them, whether proceeding from the editors of low prints, or from those whose previous associations ought to have suggested a little courtesy, if not a love of justice. They have heard in silence the most monstrous falsehoods uttered in relation to themselves and their official conduct, relying upon the intelligence of those for whom they were laboring for final approbation. This approbation has been bestowed in the most distinct and unequivocal manner, and is a sufficient antidote against slander, as well as a satisfactory reward for exertion.

It is, therefore, with renewed confidence that they announce their intention of pursuing the same general policy the present year that they adopted the last.

They intend to buy at a liberal price, and so far as their means will permit, every good picture that is offered to them.

They intend to promote as much as possible a thorough study of the elements of artistic education, and particularly that attention to Form in which our artists are generally deficient.

They intend to encourage decided merit in beginners, although it may be accompanied by manifest faults, making such a discrimination in their prices as may prove a strong incentive to the correction of defects.

They intend to foster by all means in their power the development of a National school, and to cultivate those peculiarities which, while they are consistent with the true principles of Art, seem to distinguish, to a considerable extent, its manifestations in America.

They intend, as far as practicable, to aid other departments besides Painting, particularly the Plastic Arts and Engraving.

They intend to exhibit in their Gallery every good work of which they can obtain the use, whether belonging to private individuals or otherwise, the production of ancient or modern times, or of native or foreign origin.

They intend to bestow the privileges of the Institution upon all who are worthy of them without any discrimination, except that which shall be founded upon merit and established fame.

They intend to oppose in every honorable way all illegitimate modes of encouraging Art, and particularly all speculations which, under the cover of enlightening public taste, are intended to increase private gain, no matter what distinguished individuals may lend their names to these mercenary schemes.

If these objects be approved by the friends of the Art-Union, the most distinct and valuable expression of this approbation will be their *EARLY SUBSCRIPTIONS*. A great deal is said upon this subject from year to year, and the public may consider such appeals as matters of course. It should be understood, however, that if this past delay in subscribing be repeated, the prosperity of the Institution will be *SERIOUSLY PERILLED*. It was only by the disinterested generosity of individuals, and the assumption by them of heavy liabilities, entirely beyond the claims of official duty, that the business of the last year could be successfully conducted. So late as the second day of November, less than one-third of the members had registered their names. *Ten thousand* subscriptions were taken during the three weeks before the drawing, and after nearly all the expenses of the year had been incurred.

It happened fortunately that the calculations of the Managers in respect to the probable amount of receipts were verified with considerable precision. It is not just however that the efficiency of the Institution should be made to depend upon the risk of the accuracy of such calculations. The amount of each subscription is not so large but that it may be paid as conveniently at the beginning as at the end of the year. Scarcely anything is gained to the subscriber by this delay, while the interests of Art, and of the members generally, must suffer considerably on account of it. A moment's reflection should convince every one that the greater the opportunity for inquiry and deliberation, the more judicious will be the appropriation of the funds, and that no extensive enterprise can be undertaken without a certain knowledge in advance, that ample means have been provided for its accomplishment. The best mode to enable the Managers to exercise this necessary care, and form any enlarged plans for the encouragement of American Art, is to place in their hands, early in the year, at least as much as a fourth part of the sum which is to be eventually contributed. We trust that this appeal to the interest, as well as the patriotism of the friends of the Art-Union will not be neglected as similar ones have been on previous occasions.

MR HUNTINGTON AND THE ART-UNION.

Mr. Huntington has published an interesting catalogue in connection with the present exhibition of his works, and prefixed to it a paper, which contains many pleasant reminiscences of his artistic education and graceful tributes of regard to personal friends. Among others, the Managers of the Art-Union receive an expression of esteem. Immediately after this, we find the following paragraph:—

"The kindly intercourse which for several years existed between the Art-Union and the Academy of Design, has unhappily declined; indeed, greatly to the regret of the lovers of peace and cordiality, that estrangement, which began

only in a slight suspicion on both sides, has grown into a decided animosity. That repose of mind, in which the Professors of the Fine Arts should always pursue their studies, has been disturbed by the feverish excitements of contending factions. Some remarks, which have lately most injudiciously been published, have touched to the quick that excitable body of men, the Artists. It is perfectly natural, however, that the Artists should be jealous of whatever affects the honor and prospects of their own Academy. They would be cowardly poltroons, indeed, if they did not rise to the defence at once—when, in the form of sneering insinuations, an influence has crept forth, tending unjustly to prejudice the public against their beloved institution. It is earnestly to be desired that there be no pitched battle; let such struggles be far from our quiet and peaceful pursuits; but, if a war there *should* be, and the Academy is forced to assume a posture of open defence, every Artist will at once rally around her, and sustain her at all hazards, with the zeal and enthusiasm which belongs to the profession. As great respect and admiration as we may feel for the Art-Union, it can never equal the love and veneration with which we are constrained to regard the Academy. The first is an acquaintance of the world—the last is dear and cherished, like a daughter of our own household."

We were quite startled by the introduction of so warlike a passage in the midst of this pleasant Pastoral Symphony. It seemed to us a sort of melo-dramatic display of chivalry, which was not required by the occasion. It was like the sudden entrance of the Man-at-Arms at a Coronation banquet, who disturbs the harmony of the festival, by throwing down his gauntlet, and offering to fight all the world, when every body is thinking only of being happy, and enjoying in peace the good things before him. We are taking a quiet stroll with our friend amid the charming scenery of Verplanck's point—

"All seems as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill."

Our talk is of the philosophy of Art, and the friendship between its Professors and its Patrons, when suddenly our kind-hearted companion shocks us, like another Roderick Dhu, by assuming a hostile attitude, and whistling for his brother Academicians—

"From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife."

We cannot help regarding the want of correspondence between this warlike demonstration and the complimentary passages which surround it, as a violation at least of the good taste which its author usually exhibits.

We desire, however, to treat this subject in a more serious way. Mr. Huntington's high position as an artist, and his estimable character as a man, give importance to his opinions. It is therefore the more necessary to show what we think is erroneous in his views respecting both the course of the Bulletin and the claims of the Academy, of which he appears as the champion. We understand by the context, and in other ways, that he applies the terms "sneering insinuations" and "remarks most injudiciously published," to an article in the December number of our Journal.

The Art-Union had been made the constant object of unjust attack by several artists whose fame it was endeavoring to advance—whose merits it had liberally rewarded—and who had received from it their very means of support.